

IMPROVING STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION ON NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH GROUP WORK

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to investigate how well Group work technique can improve students' reading comprehension to the eight grade students of MTs Al Muhajirin. To collect the data, the writer used comprehension test, observation checklist table, and field notes. The treatments took two cycles. The participant of this research is the students in eight grade students especially class VIII of MTs Al Muhajirin Rasau Jaya in academic 2014/2015, which consist of 22 students. Based on the achievement test's result, the researcher discovered a good mark that was shown by the scores of the students from cycle to cycle was increases. The mean score of the first cycle was 61.36 and the second cycle was 71.81. The research findings of the classroom action research were satisfying. All the indicators of success had been fulfilled. Students' mean score increased and teaching learning process become better. Group Work helps students in understanding the text.

Keywords: reading comprehension, narrative text, group work

Abstrak:

tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui seberapa baik teknik kerja kelompok dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa kelas 8 MTs Al Muhajirin. Dalam mengumpulkan data, penulis menggunakan uji pemahaman, table observasi, dan catatan lapangan. Penelitian dilakukan dalam 2 siklus. Objek penelitiannya adalah siswa kelas 8 MTs Al Muhajirin Rasau Jaya pada tahun pelajaran 2014/2015, yang terdiri atas 22 siswa. Berdasarkan hasil uji kemampuan, peneliti menemukan bahwa nilai yang baik ditemukan meningkat dari siklus yang satu ke siklus berikutnya. Nilai rata – rata pada siklus pertama adalah 61.36 dan pada siklus kedua 71.81. Temuan pada penelitian ini hasilnya memuaskan. Semua indikator keberhasilan siswa dapat terpenuhi. Nilai rata – rata siswa meningkat dan proses pembelajaran pun menjadi lebih baik. Kerja kelompok membantu siswa dalam memahami teks.

Kata Kunci: pemahaman membaca, teks naratif, kerja kelompok

Reading is one of the basic communicative skills which have very complex process. A reader is expected to be able to comprehend what is being

discussed, involved the process of acquiring grammatical structures and vocabularies of the language and meaning. Reading is not just an eye movement over words. Reading needs comprehension.

At school, reading is one aspect of language that should be learnt and taught to the students. Comprehending reading passage becomes the target of improving reading. Moreover, in improving reading comprehension, the teacher needs to master factors such as students, materials, teaching media, technique and method of improving. All of these can help the students learn more enjoyable. Sometimes students assume reading is not interesting activity. It is just a matter of wasting time. As the result they get nothing in this process.

In English subject, there are many kinds of texts with different stories which are called as genres of text. Genre-based texts are recommended to read in the syllabus based on Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP), there are many valuable information and lesson from of the stories.

Narrative text is one kind of texts that must be comprehended by the students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah(MTs) Almuahjirin Rasau Jaya, it was found that the students were still difficult to comprehend the text. They were not able to infer the moral values of the text, they could not even find the meaning of certain words and also use the accurate language feature – past tense. As the result, their scores of narrative reading tasks were mostly below the standard minimum score(< 70).

Based on the observation on the students' answer sheets as well the process of reading activities, the researcher found that there were three factors underlying this problem : first, the students were not interested in reading the text given by the teacher. When the teacher gave them a task to find the content of narrative story, the students felt very displeased and uninterested. Most of them, even, yelled out and lying down on the desk complaining about the task. They said it was difficult for them to do the implicit moral lessons.

Second factor, the students had lack of vocabulary. Their lack of vocabulary influenced their skill to comprehend the text because they did not know the meaning of the text. In other word, knowing the meaning of the vocabulary that strings up the text is very crucial because English is still foreign language that they have not mastered yet. As Spancer and Hay (in Alyousef, 2005) said that word recognition is the most important component in mastery reading. They showed that having vocabulary is an essential part to chain and to construct the meaning of the text.

Third factor, many students have difficulty to increase their skill in English. They do not look interested when the teacher asked them to read passage and do some exercise based on the passage individually because there is no the facilities in the school, for example have not text book and not all the students have a dictionary.

Realizing such poor situation, the researcher was called to find the solution. Therefore, researcher considered that the technique being used by the teacher should be replaced. She should choose an appropriate teaching technique that can attract the students' sympathy and motivation to focus on narrative text. By then, they would be able to recognize, even to comprehend the text. The technique that

can improve the students' interest to focus on learning narrative text in order to comprehend the story – group work.

Group work is a technique that is implemented by using cooperative learning method. Group work will help the students to discuss the problems effectively, the teacher can apply the strengths of group work to reach constructive solutions on improving reading comprehension. Through group work technique, the students are given more chances to share their opinion, analyze information, and work together in groups. In group work, every member can become a contributor, joint the activity and improve their knowledge how to learn effectively. Elizabeth G. Cohen (1994) said “group work is an effective technique for achieving certain kinds of intellectual and social learning goals”.

Therefore, the writer was interested in improving reading comprehension through group work by conducting a CAR. Through this research, the students were expected to be able to comprehend narrative text well. Besides, they were expected to improve their vocabulary, to master linguistic features better as well as to learn some valuable moral lessons from the stories.

Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose of reading guide the reader's selection of texts.

The purpose of reading also determines the appropriate approach to reading comprehension. A person who needs to know whether she can afford to eat at a particular restaurant needs to comprehend the pricing information provided on the menu, but does not need to recognize the name of every appetizer listed. A person reading poetry for enjoyment needs to recognize the words the poet uses and the ways they are put together, but does not need to identify main idea and supporting details. However, a person using a scientific article to support an opinion needs to know the vocabulary that is used, understand the facts and cause effect sequences that are presented, and recognized ideas that are presented as hypothesis and givens.

Reading is one of the English skills which is very close to the knowledge of the learners toward English. It is an interactive process between the readers and a text which leads to fluency. There are two kinds of ways of readers interactions toward reading in which the reader tries to elicit the meaning and where the various knowledge are being used: linguistic or system knowledge (through bottom-up processing) and schematic knowledge (through top-down processing).

In teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), the teacher should be able to select an appropriate material that is suitable to the aim of the students level. Beside that, it should be supported interesting technique. For the example, in reading class, teacher uses reading material in the text books and technique to active their background knowledge and improve their reading comprehension. Group work overcomes students' problem in reading comprehension. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008) stated “group work can ask student to higher levels of comprehension because they can get many suggestions what they have read before

with other”. By having group work, students who have the similar experience as the reading text, can share the other students in the group.

The concept of group work could be explored by considering some definitions on group work provided by language experts as follows: Richards and Rodgers (2001) mentioned that cooperative learning is group work structured in such a way as to enable student’ interaction, the exchange of information, as well as cooperation rather than competition in learning.

According to Brown (2001:177) group work is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language.

Harmer (2001) indicates that “group work is a activity allows students to make their own decision without being told what to do by the teacher. Therefore, teacher do not usually involve in the group discussion. In such process, however, teacher seldom become static in front of the class, but moves around, going from one group to another, answering and asking questions, watching and listening to specific groups.

In teaching reading comprehension, group work activity makes students to discuss and solve about their problem that they face when they have individual time to think about the text. Klinger, Vaughn, Boardman (2007) stated that teacher can provide facilities to reading comprehension. One of them is to ask students to work with a group to read and reread passages. Students can teach each other or learn from each other. They can be a good teacher for their friends. Because they can be communicate well with similar language than teacher and students.

METHOD

In this research the writer uses a classroom action research. This research is aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning process. In this case, the writer wants to improve the students reading comprehension of eighth grade students of MTs Al MuhajirinRasau Jaya by implementing group work.

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2006:5) action research is about practitioners creating new ideas about how to improve practice, and putting those ideas forward as their personal theories of practice. Similarly, Cherry (1999:1) states that “the process of action research can be described as a continuous cycle of planning, action and review of the action. During the action research cycle, experience is continually recycled; earlier experiences and data are revisited in the light of accumulated data; new action is planned in the light of what went on before, and all experience are systematically reviewed and evaluated.”

Burns (2010:2) said “action research is part of a broad movement that has been going on in education generally for some time. It is related to the ideas of reflective practice and ‘the teacher as researcher’.” Whereas, classroom action research is aimed to improve what happened in the classroom as the solution for the problem that appear and faced by students and also the teacher. Moreover, it is purposed to fix any real and practical problem in teaching learning that includes both of the teacher and the students in classroom.

Classroom action research is necessary to the teacher. For the teacher, classroom action research is professional development. Burns (2010:6) said “for a teacher who is reflective, and committed to developing as a think professional,

CAR is an appealing way to look more closely at puzzling classroom issues or to delve into teaching dilemmas". The teacher can get feedback not only on reflection but also on reliable data collection and analysis. There is also more effective, innovative and focused teaching material development.

Lewin describe Classroom Action Research into 4 steps : planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. As stated by Lewin, there are four stages in Action Research, in this research; the researcher is also going to conduct those four stages.

Planning

The teacher collaborate with the collaborator plans the teaching learning activity with the powerful technique to overcome the problem which is found in the previous learning process. It includes the preparation before the teaching learning process; such as creating the lesson plan, preparing the supported materials, and preparing the instruments or aids. In this early stage, the collaborator also prepares the instruments for collecting the data: observation checklist and camera recorder. The preparation which is possibly set up are the result of pre-test, lesson plan, teaching media or teaching aid, supported material, observation sheet, and camera recorder.

Acting

In this stage, the teacher was handle the class; meanwhile, the researcher who acts as the collaborator will observe the process of the classroom activity while the trusted technique is being used. The acting stage is the application of the planning stage. Thus, in this stage the real teacher will take the lesson plan, the supported material and teaching aids, as well as the evaluation questions. In any case, collaborator / the researcher will take the observation checklist and camera recorder to observe the process.

The teacher was use Group Work to improve the students' reading comprehension on Narrative text. Group Work is trusted to solve the problem faced by the students related to the reading comprehension that has been figured out: vocabulary, motivation, and sensitive sense of reading which concerns with the relation of students' background knowledge to the story given. Below are the procedures of Group Work in acting stage: 1) the teacher mentions the objectives and the goals of the study which are stated in the lesson plan and also do some triggering activities. 2) The teacher divides the students into some group consists of 4 person of each group. There will be one captain in each group that will lead the other members in the process. 3) The teacher explains how Group Work is to the students; what they are going to do in the activity, and distribute the Narrative story. 4) The teacher models the activity at the first before the students do it in their group. 5) The students work out with the story in their group. 6) The teacher helps the students if there is something they do not understand.

Observing

In the observing stage, the researcher who was be acting as the collaborator observes the activity by using the observation checklist and camera recorder. The observation not only aimed to the students but also to the teacher; how the teacher gives instructions and teaches the students; whether the procedures are relevant to

the lesson plan or not. The observer observes the students from their activity whether all the students involve actively in the teaching learning activity or not. The observer checks the activeness of the students and teacher by putting checklist to the observation checklist which has been provided. The statements in the observation checklist are the expectation of both teacher and the researcher toward the achievement that the students will get within the Group Work is holding. It is aimed to get the information which is needed in reflective stage; in order to measure the weaknesses or shortages in the process of teaching learning.

Reflecting

In this stage, both of researcher and the real teacher reflects of what has happened in the planning and observation stage. This stage is to determine the success of the technique being used; whether it works well or there are still weaknesses toward the process. In reflection stage, the students are given an evaluation test related to their discussion. The purpose of this evaluation test is to measure the comprehension of the students toward the narrative story which has been discussed in group by using Group Work.

After getting the result of the test, the teacher and the researcher can reflect the students' comprehension in form of score. The result of the observation checklist will be translated into sentences. It will be used as a tool to gather the information. Then, the teacher and the researcher combine all the information they have collected from the tools. Finally, they determine whether there will be another cycle to improve the result and the process or not.

These are tools which are being used in this research: a) Observation checklist; It is used while the observation is being held. The function is as the data collection, as well as evidence of the observation process. The researcher makes note of the observation process in observation checklist. b) Achievement test; The kind of test is multiple choice test. The researcher constructed ten questions. The students answer the questions based on the narrative text given. c) Field Notes; The writer keeps the process of the activity in form of a note that will record anything happen in the classroom. It is made to record other aspects or unpredictable things that are not available in the checklist.

In the process of data analysis, the writer analyzed the data that are taken from written test, observation checklist and field note. To get students score from student written test, the researcher will use formula as follow:

$$\text{Students score} = \frac{\text{Students correct answer}}{\text{Number of questions}} \times 100$$

To get students mean score, the researcher will measure it by using the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum FX}{N}$$

Notes:

M = Mean Score

$\sum FX$ = The sum of individual score

N = The number of students
(Heaton, 1975:176)

The result will be categorized as follow:

Table 1
Classification of the Average Score

Score	Classification
80-100	Good to excellent
70-79	Average to good
60-69	Poor to average
0-59	Poor

Taken from Heaton (1975)

If the average of the students score is below 70, means they have not passed the standard minimum score and it is needed for the teachers and the collaborators to hold the next cycle in order to improve the students' improvement. If the average of the students score is above 70, means they have passed the standard minimum score. The teachers and the collaborators may choose whether they would like to hold the next cycle in order to improve the students' improvement more or not.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Concerning the research problems, the data is focused on the process reading comprehension improvement of MTs Al Muhajirin students. There are several that researcher did to find the data in this research. The data is got from structural observation by observing students' work sheet (LKS) "Wajar". It is used to know that CTL approach is appropriate to solve MTs Al Muhajirin students' problems. The researcher doing CAR in two cycles which includes four steps in each cycle like: planning, acting, observing and reflecting in order to solve the problems that researcher found.

The writer collected the data by giving students the test of reading comprehension through group work at every cycle in learning English to the class eight grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Al MuhajirinRasau Jaya in academic year 2014/2015. There are some difficulties in teaching reading comprehension, some of students said that they do not know the meaning of the text, the implicit moral lesson. Its problem happened because of limited vocabulary of MTs Al Muhajirin students. The indicators of the students' improvement can be seen in the result of the test as will be presented in the next sections. The table below is used to determine the qualification of the students test score.

Many students have difficulty in English and they do not look interested when the teacher asked them to read narrative text and do some exercise based on the text individually because the school is lack of facilities. Therefore, the

students had difficulties in learning reading comprehension but they didn't do anything to solve their problems. Actually, the students like to reading comprehension through group work than individually.

FIRST CYCLE

The first result test the writer applied formula as follow:

$$M = \frac{\sum FX}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{1350}{22}$$

$$M = 61.36 \text{ (poor to average)}$$

The score of the students' comprehension was still unsatisfactory. The result of individual students score showed that from 22 students averagely 27.24% (whose scores were 80-100) were qualified as good to excellent, 18.16% students (whose score were 70-79) were qualified as average to good, 27.24% students (whose score were 60-69) were qualified as poor to average, and 27.24% students (whose scores were under 60) were qualified as poor. Then the sum of students' score was divided by the number of students to obtain the mean score. It is 61.36 and this qualified as poor to average.

Almost all of the students whose score were under the minimum achievement standard in our school for English are 70. The students felt uncomfortable with the teaching learning atmosphere because there was a collaborator behind them. The teaching learning process was passive, all the students paid to the teacher explanation about the reading material. Students not only lack of vocabulary and grammar, but also they were lack of detail information.

Second Cycle

The teacher gave the students reading test to see the improvement of students' comprehension on second cycle. When the students finished their works on a piece of paper, they submitted their work to the teacher.

In observing, the teacher and collaborator observed the result of students' reading comprehension. The mean score of students reading comprehension was 71.81 point which was categorized as average to good. The result of observation showed that the most of students gave good response while teaching learning process. They were enthusiastic in teaching learning process.

The second result test the writer applied formula as follow:

$$M = \frac{\sum FX}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{1580}{22}$$

$$M = 71.81 \text{ (Average to good)}$$

In general, the students had better comprehension in narrative text. In addition, there were 40.86% of students who got score under that classified as good to excellent, 22.70% of students who got average to good, 27.24% Of

students who got poor to average, 9.08% of students who got poor. The students' score was satisfactory and reached the standard of successful.

In reflecting, both the teacher and the collaborator reflected what had been done in cycle. Based on the result of the students' individual score, they concluded that the second cycle had been successful. The students reading comprehension in this cycle showed better than the first cycle.

The students enjoy facing their reading class. It seemed that all of the students were ready for reading. When teacher came to the class, the students seemed like very conscious and ready to read the narrative text that they were going to study. The teacher gave directions to the students to read the text and ask them to answer the questions orally based on the text to group the students to comprehend the text, most of students participate actively in sharing their idea to their group. At the end of the teaching learning process the writer asked about students' opinion about group work technique. The students said that group work was really helped them to comprehend the text easier.

Table 2
The result of the students' actions

Cycle	Test result	Qualification
First	61.36	Poor to average
Second	71.81	Average to good

All the students showed that they had made a good progress in each cycle. It gave a conclusion that group work had positive impact in improving students' reading comprehension. The students score at the first cycle was 61.36 that was categorized into poor to average, and the last cycle it grew up to 71.81 that was categorized into average to good. The reading comprehension through group work was improved from cycle to cycle. The result was satisfying so that the teacher and collaborator decided to stop the cycle.

Discussion

The researcher conducted this research for two cycles, there are cycle 1, and cycle 2. The purpose of this research is to improve the students reading comprehension through group work. The eight grade students of MTs Al Muhajirin Rasau Jaya consisted of 22 students". The students had difficulties in reading comprehension.

The first meeting, the writer used narrative text as the reading material. The students said that it was difficult for them to understand the narrative text. The teacher explained about the narrative text. First the teacher used picture to arouse their motivation and then asked the students to describe it briefly. The students felt unconformable with the teaching learning atmosphere because there was an observer behind them. The teaching learning process was passive, all the students paid to the teacher explanation about the reading material.

The results of students in the first meeting were unsatisfactory. Most of the students had problems in vocabulary, and grammatical pattern. The teaching learning process was passive, all the students paid to the teacher explanation about

the reading material. The student anxiety was so high that they did not want to share their prediction of the text to the teacher and to the other class member.

The second meeting, after stage in one cycle, students showed their significant progress in the result of reading comprehension. The students enjoy facing their reading class. It seemed that all of the students were ready for study in the group. When the teacher came to the class, the students seemed very conscious and ready going study through group work. The teacher gave directions to the students to read the text and ask them to make question based on the text through group work the students to comprehend the text, most students participate actively in sharing their idea to the friends in the group. At the end of teaching learning process the writer asked for the students' opinion about group work technique. The students very happy and said that group work really helped them to comprehend the text easier.

The teacher computed the students' individual score. The research findings showed that the students' mean score in the first was 61.36 and qualified into poor to average. Whereas, in the second cycle, the students' mean score increased to 71.81 and qualified into good to average. It showed that the students had improved their learning.

Through group work in improving students' understanding in reading comprehension finally support the teaching process and improves the students' reading habitual. The collaborator had given a positive view about the activity. He also agreed that it is an interesting activity, not only to motivate the students in reading habitual, but also to make them enjoy and relax during the class. He also felt it is an activity that can help the teacher in getting the students truly in reading ability. That process was building of the relationship between the students.

In addition, the research findings of the classroom action research were satisfying. All the indicators of success had been fulfilled. Students' mean score increased and teaching learning process become better. Group work helped the students to improve their understanding of narrative text, group work help students to work together to arrange a narrative text as well as to identify the generic structure of the text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the result, the research found a good result that was shown by the main score of the students from cycle to cycle that increases from 61.36 first cycles to 71.81. Besides considering the score, the writer also found the positive response from the students that they can learn how to share and discuss main idea and information in narrative text with other. Group work technique, the students tend to have more participation reading process. The active participation can occur in the discussion process and in the correction process where the students gave their opinion each other in answering the question. According this finding, the eighth grade students of MTs Al Muhajirin Rasau Jaya can improve reading comprehension on narrative text through Group Work.

Suggestions

Based on the research finding that the writer has found, group work technique can help the students to comprehend the narrative text. Because the technique proved that it was very attractive, so the students can share their idea easier in the class. For the reason, this technique is recommended in reading comprehension to eight graders of MTs Al Muhajirin Rasau Jaya in academic year 2014/2015 very well. And also it is recommended to conduct the future research about group work technique. And for the teacher has to be more creative in designing the teaching technique.

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